



St NICOLAS' CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
A Service of the Word



Sunday 14 March 2021
Led by Bishop Henry Scriven

Mothering Sunday

The fourth Sunday in Lent is called Mothering Sunday. There are traditions associated with Mothering Sunday in England which date back as long ago as the 16th century. It is told that this was the day when people were encouraged to return to worship in their 'mother church' where they had been baptised. People who usually attended the local parish church, would make a longer journey to the 'mother church' or cathedral of the Diocese. Girls in domestic service would bake to show their mothers their new skills in the form of a gift, traditionally a simnel cake. On this day many girls who were in service were allowed time off from domestic chores to visit their mothers and their family.

Today Mothering Sunday is a popular day when Christians choose to use the occasion to think about all things which concern motherhood. We give thanks for the Church as Mother, the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus, we remember that God cares for us like a mother and last but not least we give thanks for our own mothers. Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday in Lent and it is a time of special for thanksgiving.

This Sunday is the one day of joy in Lent, when flowers abound in all churches and when people are allowed a time off from the penitential season. It is also known as Mid-Lent Sunday, Refreshment Sunday or Laetare Sunday. The Latin name of Laetare, means rejoice.

Introductory Music: God so loved the world (Stainer)
St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Royal School of Church Music

Concluding Music: Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 731 (J.S. Bach)
by Ben Giddens

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O Lord, open our lips
All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise

Rock of ages

CP 565

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfill thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

A M Toplady (1740-1778)

Tune Toplady

Grace Community Church - Sun Valley, California

Prayers of Penitence

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Make me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your holy spirit from me:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

cf Psalm 51

Promise of Forgiveness (Absolution)

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Collect

Merciful Lord, absolve your people from their offences, that through your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins which by our frailty we have committed; grant this, heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Word of God

Ephesians 2: 1 - 10

First Reading:

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Second Reading:

John 3: 14 - 21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven:
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgement given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own.

There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the head.

There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper home of bliss.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all gladness
In the joy of Christ our Lord.

*Frederick William Faber
The Choir of St Paul's Cathedral.*

Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Intercessions

At the end of each bidding when the leader says:

Lord in your mercy,

Please respond:

Hear our prayer

At the end of the prayers we say the Lord's Prayer together.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

Come thou fount of every blessing

CP 406

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
Mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I find my greatest treasure;
Hither by thy help I've come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Bought me with his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for thy courts above.

Robert Robinson (1758); Alt: Martin Madan (1760)

Tune: NETTLETON

Pepperdine University

The Blessing

**We shall keep the Zoom session open if anyone wants to stay online
and chat - don't forget to un-mute.**